

Editor, Silverton Standard

CC: Sabrina Forrest , Site Manager Assessment Mgr.

October 15, 2011

Editor,

Designating the Upper Cement Creek area a Superfund site would be the wrong approach to efficiently and effectively improve the water quality of the Animas River. A Superfund designation would impose upon the area a costly and inflexible governmental process. It would discourage cooperative, locally-driven solutions to a matter of local concern. Placing the Superfund tag on our area would, no doubt, trigger lawsuits among EPA and those who might otherwise be available to fund reasonable cleanup efforts. In this scenario, only the lawyers get paid.

I have worked for Sunnyside Gold/Kinross as they have continually moved forward in their efforts to reclaim and revegetate the areas they are responsible for. I have found them to be honest and sincere in their efforts. I have fertilized, planted and replanted areas that struggle to vegetate due to high altitude and rocky ground. I have never been told just to let it be. The company has always come back to me with another, "Let's try this." I do not believe this is a company trying to walk away from their environmental responsibility.

Working together to clean up the Animas River is the best path forward and I strongly discourage the EPA from triggering the legal gridlock that will inevitably follow a Superfund designation.



Pete Maisel
Owner
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February 1, 2012

Mr. Pete Maisel
Owner
Maisel Excavation, LLC
P.O. Box 826
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RE: Upper Cement Creek, CO

Dear Mr. Maisel:

Thank you for your October 15, 2011 letter to Sabrina Forrest regarding Upper Cement Creek.

We have heard from a number of citizens and other stakeholders who have voiced interest in working collaboratively to address water quality in Upper Cement Creek. We'd like to assure you that the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has not made a decision concerning listing of the Upper Cement Creek area. The decision to propose a site for the National Priorities List (NPL) can only be made after a technical evaluation is completed to determine if the site is eligible. The EPA is just completing this technical evaluation. In addition, both the State and the EPA seek community support prior to a site being proposed for listing and the EPA wants the community to understand why we are looking at this option.

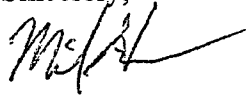
More than 15 years ago the EPA committed to a community-based environmental protection effort in San Juan County, and indicated that Superfund would not be used as long as progress was being made in improving water quality in the Animas River. Unfortunately, water quality has significantly degraded in the Animas River in the last five years. It is evident that historic mine waste in Cement Creek, a tributary of the Animas River, is having a negative impact on the Animas. These impacts are likely related to cessation of water treatment in Gladstone and plugging of the American Tunnel. The EPA has compared the last five years of data to earlier data sets that indicated improvements in water quality. The Animas River Stakeholder Group (ARSG) has summarized some of these data and the EPA is also evaluating these data. If experience in other mining impacted areas is any guide, the resources required for solutions to this sort of problem will be substantial, and long-term operation and maintenance of the solution or solutions may be required.

EPA is working with other federal agencies, the State, and local community members to identify options to reverse the degradation and improve water quality in the Animas River. It is too soon to make conclusions about how best to correct this condition. However, if the best solutions require substantial

and long-term resources, CERCLA process and the NPL may be the only means to assure that full resources available to the EPA can be committed. EPA is also limited in its ability to fund interim actions and long-term projects that require ongoing operations and maintenance.

The EPA looks forward to continuing the dialogue with you and other local community members regarding possible options to address water quality issues in Upper Cement Creek. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me at 303-312-6607 or holmes.michael@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Holmes', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Michael Holmes
Project Manager